



Humpback Whale Protections Working Group

Work Plan

Issue: Humpback Whale Protections

Current and emerging threats to humpback whales in Hawai'i, how HIHWNMS should address them.

Description:

The main Hawaiian Islands are the primary mating and calving ground for humpback whales in the North Pacific Ocean. The HIHWNMS was established to protect humpback whales and their primary habitats around the Islands. Since the time of designation, the Hawaiian population has grown at a reasonably healthy rate (5-6%), however, at the same time new information and emerging potential threats have been identified which may have unanticipated and/or undesirable impacts.

NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Resources is currently reviewing the status of humpback whales, and may delist or downlist the Hawaiian population. If so, the Sanctuary must determine if protection for Hawai'i's humpbacks will be diminished, at a time of new and emerging threats. This working group will consider the role that the HIHWNMS should play in the continued protection of Hawai'i's humpback whales.

Method of Communication within the Working Group:

This working group will most effectively accomplish this task by conducting an invitational two day workshop. The workshop will also be structured to allow non-invited observers, who will have specific times for public comment. Both before and after the workshop, the group will organize and follow up through email and conference calls.